

MENS HEALTH WEEK 15-21 JUNE

There are a number of health concerns that are statistically more common in men such as alcohol abuse, suicide and heart disease. It is concerning to note that there have been increasing reports which suggest that the COVID-19 outbreak is posing a greater risk to men.

At this stage, there isn't a definitive reason why men are statistically more affected than women. The reasons could be biological, cultural and/or behavioural. It has been suggested that due to the differences in immune systems between men and women, this may play a part in women having stronger immune defences, therefore improving their chances in fighting off the virus.

It is known that the virus is more dangerous for people with existing health issues, particularly cardiovascular problems and hypertension - both of which disproportionately affect men. Research has found that this is partially due to behavioural factors in men, as on average, men are more likely to indulge in unhealthy lifestyle habits such as smoking and excessive drinking.

With a recent audit of adult critical care showing that men make up 70% of COVID-19 patients in critical care, it is important that men consider taking extra precautions in avoiding the virus.

1. **Follow government guidance** – keep an eye on the latest guidance and follow that to ensure that you keep yourself safe.
2. **Social distance** - remain at least two meters apart from anyone outside of your household unless it is someone that you have formed a “support bubble” with within the guidelines. For example, if you enter a supermarket or engage in exercise outside.
3. **Wash your hands** - often with antibacterial soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public space or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
4. **Cover your mouth and nose** - with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Used tissues should be put in the bin immediately, avoid touching your face afterwards and wash your hands as soon as possible.
5. **Be cautious if you are a smoker** - whilst smoking, the chances of transmitting the virus is increased when the smoker's fingers touch their mouth.
6. **Comply with our new working practices** – as our employees return to work, you will receive a presentation on remobilisation explaining the steps that we are taking to keep you safe and the steps that we expect you to take to keep yourself and your colleagues safe.

It is important to remember that regardless of your gender, we are all susceptible to contracting COVID-19, and that we should all be putting measures in place to protect ourselves from the virus.

Please remember that our Employee Assistance Programme which is provided by **Health Assured** remains available to all our employees. Health Assured can provide support on a wide range of wellbeing issues. Health Assured can be contacted 24/7 on **0800 030 5182** where professionally trained counsellors are available to take your call and provide confidential advice and support on any issue that may be concerning you. There is no cost to you for accessing the service.